



***For Immediate Release***

Date	Contact	
January 16, 2004	Ellen Qualls (804) 786-2211, x 2379 cell: (804) 393-9429	Mike Abbott DMME (276) 523-8146 (276) 356-3405 <a href="http://www.dmme.virginia.gov">www.dmme.virginia.gov</a>

**Governor Warner Announces \$1.3 Million to Provide Public Water to Over 250 Homes in Southwest Virginia**

*— Abandoned Mine Land Funding Pays for Water Project —*

**RICHMOND** — Governor Mark R. Warner announced today that Wise County and Dickenson County will share approximately \$1.3 million in anticipated Abandoned Mine Land (AML) funding for public water projects. Public water will be extended to 31 homes in Dickenson County and 225 homes in Wise County. All project areas were substantially impacted by coal surface mining activities conducted prior to 1981 and are eligible for funding by Virginia's AML Program.

“Virginia’s Abandoned Mine Land Program has annually designated the maximum allowable amount of its reclamation project funding to water restoration projects,” said Governor Warner. “Each year, local governments in the coalfields have cooperated to secure supplemental funding to help make these water projects possible. Such cooperative efforts at the state and local level have continued to successfully reflect the core of my water policy reform and commitment to expanding water supplies to more people in Southwest Virginia.”

“State grant programs like Virginia’s AML Program continue to help provide clean and safe drinking water to citizens living in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, whose water supplies were lost or damaged as a result of past coal mining,” said Commerce and Trade Secretary Michael J. Schewel. Since 1984, Virginia’s AML Program has provided over \$15.6 million in financial assistance to 23 water projects serving over 3,500 homes in the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Tazewell and Wise. Funding for the projects will be requested in DMME’s 2004 Consolidated AML Grant.

The Lick Fork Water Project (\$588,500) will extend water lines to 31 homes in western Dickenson County. In Wise County, seventy-five homes in the Honey Branch area near the Town of St. Paul

and 150 homes in the Hale's Gap, Flat Gap and Gilley communities will receive public water through the Honey Branch Water Project (\$100,000) and North Fork Water Extension Project (\$614,000). Funding of the North Fork water extension will be contingent upon the project meeting all eligibility requirements by March 31, 2004.

Virginia AML funds originate from reclamation taxes paid by the state's coal industry.

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